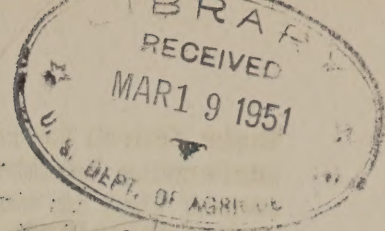


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3 "STEPPING ONWARD AT MIDCENTURY"

I was getting a little worried about that introduction. It was a very fulsome and generous one for the simpleness of my remarks. In the South where I talked on international welfare problems, the chairman of one of the ladies' clubs presided and she talked at great length about my background and I was getting more and more worried because she recited each of the foreign countries that I had been in. Finally, as she introduced me she said, "We are all looking forward to hearing Mr. Glasser's far-fetched message."

I am sure that I could not be far-fetched this morning even if I wanted to, because we have worked so closely together over the past week in the White House Conference meetings. We have worked very closely also with Mrs. Lynde, Mr. Aiton and others on the Federal Advisory Council for the White House Conference over a period of the last year and a half. I wish to state freely and fully two things: first, that we had very fine rural participation by rural groups and by rural youth and adults. Without the kind of able, sensitive help that we have had, we could not have had the fine participation we did. We heard one boy get up and announce that he was 18 years old and had never seen a trolley car before. Then he took off and talked 20 minutes. We had one State delegation, 28 or 30 of whom had never seen Washington, D. C., before. So, as we went over the lists, we began to see that these were the American people the conference represented - a real cross-section of them. The work you have done, both in the Department and out in the field has certainly been invaluable toward making the conference what it was. I have been reading stacks of mail about impressions of delegates and I thought the best perspective was given to me by the delegates from abroad who met on Friday. They had work groups in the morning and in the afternoon met as a discussion group. They felt there was complete unanimity in the conference. They represented 40 different countries and were from 15 international voluntary and governmental organizations. They said four things impressed them most. They felt most deeply impressed that in time of crisis such as this, so large an important cross-section, from the President of the United States on down, considered human values and children and young people important enough to devote major time considering how to strengthen those values and those people.

The second impression was the materials. They felt that the preparatory materials helped them get ready for the meeting and helped them very much in their own thinking and to participate in the meetings meaningfully. They saw the possibility of using these materials in their own home settings.

The third impression was the youth participation. I am sorry that the young people of this group aren't here to hear this. "We have had much more experience than you have in this in our youth movements, and most of them have gone wrong," they said. They said that they became political movements with quite ulterior purposes and in "most of our countries at one point or another the youth have become automatons." "We have picked up some ideas here as to how youth can be taught to participate in a responsible way; how their wishes can be applied at a conference."

\* Talk given by Melvin A. Glasser, Executive Director, Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, at the Extension Service Conference on Children and Youth, December 13, 1950, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.



Their fourth impression was the Thursday afternoon meeting where we discussed the conference recommendations. It is no secret that this was hard work. It is no secret that it went in a great many directions at once. The people from abroad whom I have worked with over a period of years said, "You know you people talk about democracy, you send us literature, you give broadcasts - we didn't understand well until we saw what happened Thursday. We saw differences of points of view, bitter arguments, groups lining up at the microphones. Somehow or other it came out right." It was a fair cross-section of the feelings and opinions of the American people as represented in that group. Nothing made me happier than this comment, coming from the overseas delegates.

The meetings are over. We are now in the third step of a three-step process. The first step was preparation. We did our best to have the meetings go off well, but we would not have been content if the meetings were the end. We consider them, of course, only the beginning of where we go from here and to make sure that that beginning took place quickly after that agonizing session of Thursday, the National Committee met and worked several hours to plan where we go from here and how. Of course we want your help as we move ahead in this. Structure-wise, we are having a National Citizens' Committee. The exact title is to be determined. National Citizens' Committee for Children and Youth or National Citizens' Committee on the White House Conference or something of that sort. It will have half a dozen people from the present National committee, five people from each of the three councils that have done yeoman work on this; the Advisory Committee of national organizations of youth and of State and local action. Then there will be about 20 citizens-at-large, so the new committee will be about 40 people, people chosen because of their outstanding leadership and ability. It will be a completely independent committee with no governmental people on it. This is done with malice aforethought. There will be no representation from the Federal Council. The major charge will be moving ahead on the conference recommendations. There were 11 pages of recommendations based on preliminary work discussion and final action which we are quite proud of. It represents, we think, a progressive and courageous platform for children. The job of the Citizens' Committee is to devise all kinds of ways and media for moving ahead on programs of practical action. The Federal Government is a part of this and there will be a liaison with the Federal Interdepartmental Committee on Children and Youth on which the Department of Agriculture is represented. We can work with the Federal departments, at the same time not represent them, on some of the action measures that a National Citizens' Committee may wish to undertake.

Friday morning we had a meeting with representatives from every State and territory present. This was also concerned with where do we go from here. The States are very excited; they feel they have a job to do and the job is outlined and they have the tools. They need to work out their finances and organization. Three-fourths had both organization and finances ready for the immediate future. The others are working on these plans. We shall try nationally to encourage the development of ways in every State to take the conference recommendations and work on them. We shall try to preserve and strengthen the organization structure in over a thousand counties where we have White House Conference committees. This is only a beginning. 100,000 people in the States are ready and willing to look ahead, and to help put the conference recommendations in use at the local, State and National levels.



Materials - there are all kinds of requests coming in. In order to get this job under way quickly and with the best kind of knowledge. Let me be very simple. This is three days after the end of the conference. The conference recommendations and findings will get their final editing tomorrow night. The recommendations committee has been working on them and while they have no authority to change any of the recommendations, they do have the authority to translate them into English and to make them into an organized document. We will have those ready the first of next week and they will go out in a mailing to every conference participant. We will have extra copies available for interested agencies, etc. Though, because of limited finances we cannot supply bulk orders, it can be reproduced without permission.

The Pledge to Children which really received very short shrift because of the shortage of time, will be widely circulated. It was very carefully worked on. Every word and every letter in every word got careful polishing. The ablest people in the country worked for months on this pledge to children. If it is given wide circulation, here is a basis for taking off on programs for children throughout the country. We tried, in one page, to put in poetic form everything the conference did. We think we have moved toward it. We will make copies of the pledge available for all. We are working with journals now. We want you to ask your journals to reproduce the pledge. We are dickering with a book publishing house so that they can publish this in rather elaborate form suitable for framing, in books used in school rooms, as a dramatic way of quickly putting before the American people the purpose and significance of the conference.

The State White House Conference Committees will get copies of the strip film, that was done for us by Life Magazine, presented on Monday night, "What the States are Doing and What They See as the Needs." This is a 25-minute strip film, skillfully done and which can be the basis of meetings. We forgot to give proper credit, by the way. The narration of the film was done by Clifton Fadiman. The arrangements for the film were made by his ex-wife who persuaded him to do the narration.

We shall make available, within the next week or two, copies of the newsreel shots of the conference which can be used in State and local meetings. It was carried on all four newsreel company outlets. We are trying to get a best set of copies.

Recordings are available. We are trying to push these. In those recordings it will be possible to run local meetings around the content of the conference. What we have done is to record about 20 of the major talks. The recordings will actually be short versions of the major addresses. Dr. Spock made a very stimulating and challenging talk on Monday morning which lasted 40 minutes. We took him down to the studio and he gave a 15-minute talk. One can run the record at a meeting. Other talks recorded were the President's, Mr. Ewing's, Allison Davis', Margaret Mead's. These are available at less than cost. They should be ordered quickly and be used widely. They are \$10 per set if you wish to order them. We need to have your orders in the next 30 days. The recordings will be mailed in 30 days to the persons who have ordered them.

Survey Magazine is publishing a special 16-page supplement on the conference which has four major parts. It is a very concise attempt at a summary of the fact-finding report. I have seen it and when I think that they only had about four or five printed pages to do it in, I feel that they have pointed up significant



highlights. It reports impressions of the meetings.

There will be a reproduction of the major conference recommendations and a brief article on "Where Do We Go From Here and How." You can order the special section at cost. It will be 15 cents or less, depending on the number of copies they print. Write to Survey Magazine in New York City. They have already had over 20,000 orders. It is a pretty substantial article. They are doing the service for the conference.

As to the other materials, there are three or four reports that you received. These two and the Chart Book are available at cost at the White House Conference office. If you wish to order them, they are 75 cents each and the Chart Book is a dollar. You may order them individually or you would save us work if you will leave a group of orders here and we can supply the whole group to you. We will be glad to let you have as many as you wish of this document. You cannot have the fact-finding digest at this moment. We are dickering with a publisher and we believe that in the next 60 days we can get this out in a 35-cent pocket book which would be sold in drugstores and bookstores over the country. We cannot sell this now and compete with the publishers' edition. But it will be either available in the 35-cent popular edition or in some other form. At the moment I am sorry that we cannot sell you this one.

In September we have contracted for the large edition of the fact-finding report. This is a digest. It is a digest of several thousand pages of fact-finding materials that were developed over the last few years by agencies and institutions that worked with us in the conference. It will be available in September. It may be purchased and it will be valuable as a real reference book. The conference proceedings; that is, the summary of the work groups, the panels and the discussion groups, will be available in mid-spring. We have contracted to have that published. We are dickering to see where we can get the best terms. We will let you know when and where the conference proceedings will be available.

That is where we stand in terms of materials. I have been very pleasantly surprised at how fast people have picked up on the White House Conference and are moving. There is movement to put these recommendations into action in a suit in one of the Southern States. The conference materials on prejudice and discrimination are being used in a court case. Also the material on Health Personality Development. There is evidence that some of our legal friends think it is the kind of evidence that can stand up in a courtroom. Work is under way in a number of groups to move on national legislative action and State legislative action. We have been struggling with how to get these materials to the homes and into the social institutions and out of the libraries and out of the reference desks of the experts. It is the children who really count. Most of the States are planning for a big meeting in January and a series of regional meetings across the State to discuss the implications of the White House Conference findings, "Where and How Do We Go from Here?" Predominantly rural States have set those meetings. Those who have participated and do have special knowledge and skill can be invaluable in moving ahead on that. There are all sorts of plans that are under way.

I only want to say this as I leave, on the subject of "Where Do We Go from Here." I think that the conference delegates on Thursday adopted a platform for children that was a courageous platform. We can work with it and on it. We solicit your help. You are the people who know. We can't do it without you. Second, we have



for good or for evil, made a dent into some of the stereotyped thinking and attitudes and how you can work with them. You are our allies - you can work with us, apply the knowledge we have. Apply it to the best interests of children. A State superintendent of education said to me, "You have really made trouble for me. You have kicked the props from our teacher selection and teacher training program. I hope you will help us build something that is better." Obviously no one of us has all the knowledge or ability and the skill. New props need to be built. Another aspect of what we have done is to try very hard to point to the major gaps in and about our children and how we can help to make them happy and stable children in a world placing tensions upon them. We know that we don't know many of the answers. We are determined to try to do something about it. We have a committee of scientists to fill in the holes that we have pointed to. We should do a job of sponsoring and encouraging basic research to answer some of the fundamental questions that still remain unanswered in child life. The evidence shows that the personality of children is not set beyond repair at the age of six. How much change can there be effected? That is one of the kinds of questions that we need to work on. Adolescence is one of the trying times of childhood. Surprisingly, little is known as to what to do with the problems. We have only informed guesses and those are relatively few and far between. That is another area where we want to do much basic research.

These are the major highlights of what we have done and where we see ourselves going. We see ourselves going together. I am grateful for this opportunity to talk to you on how we can move forward from the White House Conference.

